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blood is let from several men's arms, and as the fire burns, all the men cover themselves with blood and kangaroo fat.

Native Interpretation:—The palm tree totemic emblem is supposed to be the palm tree "on the outside, but inside it is all the same as a snake."—"That first ranga is called the palm tree ranga because the Yiritja make it, but the inside [sacred] meaning is all the same as the snake. When we stand them up all the Yiritja say, 'they are Wongars all right,' and the leader sings to keep off sickness, for Wongar is inside them and might make us sick."

There is no question but that the Murngin believe the totemic emblems have the totemic spirit inside them, and there is considerable evidence that the totem is believed to take possession of the emblem and move around as a snake does. On one of the nights that yermerlindi totems were first shown, one of the Yiritja men came into my camp and announced to some of the natives and myself that he had gone over to the Yiritja ground where that Wongar snake was, meaning the totemic emblem. He said, "I am afraid of that one. I am small boss for him [younger brother of some of the leaders]. He is close up to the water when he is that way, and maybe he will walk about and kill me and everybody. Yermerlindi always walks about." He meant that when the totemic emblem had been made, sung over, and completed, it was in much the same condition as the totemic spirit is when it lives in the totemic water hole; and with the totemic spirit in the emblem and outside of the water hole, it was dangerous to man. This same man told me of an experience in another Gunabibi ceremony when Yermerlindi was left by himself for a night: Yermerlindi got up and walked around by himself. The discussions among the men during the ceremonies all proved that the statements of this one man are generally believed to be true of ordinary behavior for the yermerlindi emblem. There is ample direct statement from a large number of natives that when the Yiritja men make the totemic emblems for the Gunabibi they sing over them, and this puts power and the totemic spirit in the yermerlindi.

A night after a Gunabibi ceremony when the yermerlindi was shown, one of the men had the following experience: He couldn't sleep and his sleeplessness continued for some time. Presently he heard the whistle of Muit for him, he said. He raised his head and listened. Muit whistled again. The man listened very carefully to make sure it wasn't something or someone around him, but he heard it again. He

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laid his head back and went straight to sleep. This story indicates again how sure everyone is that the totemic spirit is about during the time of the ceremonies which celebrate his power.

H. The Ceremonial Exchange of Wives

1. Distant tribal brothers exchange wives.
2. The camp dance of the sexual pair and the exchange of gifts.
3. The night of ceremonial intercourse.

1. When the men from distant clans come in to see and participate in the Gunabibi ceremony, the older men, if they do not know their kinship to one another, work out their tribal relationships after much talk; this is mental exercise appreciated by all the more intelligent Murngin. When a local man discovers that a certain visitor from a far clan is his tribal brother, he sends his younger brother to inform this person that he may have the local man's wife for ceremonial copulation at the end of the Gunabibi ceremony. He sends presents along with the younger brother. The recipient, either through his own younger brother or through the messenger, offers his own wife in exchange, and also sends presents.

This exchange of wives for ceremonial intercourse at the close of the Gunabibi serves as the grand finale of the entire ceremony. As a consequence, it is considered very dangerous and is surrounded with a fairly intricate ritual.

The above is the formal and correct way of exchanging wives for ceremonial purposes, but there are several other methods. Sometimes men agree, without the intermediation of messengers, to exchange their wives. Sometimes a man and woman arrange matters without first gaining the consent of the women's husband; but without the final consent of the woman's spouse, this could not be recognized as legal procedure.

2. After the evening meal, and before the men return to the ceremonial grounds, they sit down in a half-circle around the fire and the women dance on the other side in front of them. The women and men wear circlets of fiber string around the head above the ears and across the forehead to indicate that the exchange arrangement has been made. While the women dance, various men arise, walk over to the women and hand them presents of food, red ocher, or some other object of value. The woman presented with such a gift is the one with whom arrangments have supposedly been made for ceremonial copulation. The man who is the wife's partner later privately again gives her